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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 WARSAW 000108

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ENRG](#) [ETRD](#) [KDEM](#) [PL](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: POLISH MFA'S RUSSIA EXPERT SEES CHANGE IN RUSSIAN
TONE ON MD AS MERELY TACTICAL

REF: WARSAW 02395

Classified By: Polcouns Mary T. Curtin 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: The MFA's newly-appointed Eastern Policy Director, Jaroslaw Bratkiewicz, described the atmosphere during FM Radek Sikorski's recent visit to Russia as warm, but doubted it reflected any fundamental change in Russian outlooks. He said the Russians now say publicly that they acknowledge they do not have any veto power over MD, but Poles see the new language as just a new tactic. He said energy issues will top Prime Minister Tusk's agenda when he meets Putin on February 8, and that agreement in the EU on energy security remain at issue in Poland's decision on lifting its veto on the EU negotiating mandate with Russia. Bratkiewicz expressed private doubts about the honesty of Georgia's elections, but confirmed official support for Georgia. He affirmed that policy-making on Belarus, including support for projects such as BELSAT, had returned to the MFA under the new government. END SUMMARY.

Poles Wary of Moscow's New "Warmth"

12. (C) After accompanying Foreign Minister Sikorski to Moscow on January 21, MFA's newly-appointed Eastern Policy Director, Jaroslaw Bratkiewicz (a former director of Policy Planning and of the Iraq Task Force who had been shunted aside under the Kaczynski government), briefed PolCouns and Poloff on the visit and the state of play in Polish-Russian relations. He described the mood of the Sikorski-Lavrov meetings as "friendly, like in the Communist era," making clear that the Poles saw the change in mood as a tactical one on the Russian's part. They had no illusions that Russians had fundamentally changed their outlook despite what Bratkiewicz reported as the Russians' emphasis on "Slavic brotherhood." (Note: Bratkiewicz's colleague, Robert Kupiecki, Director of Security Policy, emphasized to DCM January 25 in a separate conversation that private discussions during the meeting were franker than the public mood and emphasized that Poland still takes seriously Russia's threats with regard to MD. End Note) On Missile Defense, the Russians stated publicly that they are not asserting any "veto" rights over Poland's decision-making on MD, in contrast to Deputy Foreign Minister Kislyak's threats during his visit to Warsaw earlier in the month. Bratkiewicz speculated that Russian FM Lavrov's statement was simply posturing, because he now understood the impossibility of derailing U.S.-Polish Missile Defense talks. (Note: Kupiecki said Lavrov's statement "has no meaning. Their strategy is unchanged.") He also speculated that the Russians in some ways respect and trust FM Sikorski because he has been consistently anti-Russian his whole life, unlike post-communist foreign ministers, whom they viewed in some ways as "traitors."

Preview of the PM's Moscow Agenda - Energy Security

13. (C) Bratkiewicz outlined the prospects for PM Tusk's upcoming visit to Moscow on February 8. He said energy security would top the agenda. Poland still opposed the planned Nordstream pipeline, and would propose that the pipeline be built overland, crossing Poland. He dismissed both the Russian and Germany justifications for building it under the Baltic, saying the motivations were purely political, or even cultural. "They like to struggle with the sea," he noted. He said that decisions on a project of this size could only be made by Putin, and that Tusk would raise it with him. (Note: The press reported January 17 that FM Sikorski publicly described Poland's proposal for an overland route for the pipeline in response to a Russian proposal that it would construct the Yamal II pipeline if Poland purchases 12 BCM of gas annually. End Note). He also said that the decision to lift Poland's veto of the EU-Russia agreement negotiating mandate depended not just on the lifting of the meat ban (which has been accomplished), but also on agreement within the EU that energy security would be part of the EU-Russia negotiations. Poland wanted agreement on a requirement that energy extraction companies be separate from suppliers, something Poland wanted as a way to control Gazprom and other Russian energy giants, but that some EU countries opposed because it would impact their own energy companies. Bratkiewicz thought that, although Russia had backed down on the meat ban once it realized the EU would stand behind its new members on the issue, Russia would still look to divide EU members and try to play them off against each other. Bratkiewicz made no mention of MD as part of the Tusk-Putin agenda.

Belarus, Balkans and Georgia

14. (C) On Belarus, Bratkiewicz explained that in contrast

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with the previous government, the current PM had returned all issues connected with Belarus to the MFA, including decision-making on European Radio Belarus (ERB) and Belarus Satellite Television (BELSAT), which would now be handled by the Development Cooperation Department headed by Jerzy Pomianowski. He said the issues would no longer, as under the Kaczynski government, be treated as an extension of domestic politics. He expressed interest in the upcoming visit of EUR/ACE Assistance Coordinator Tom Adams. Bratkiewicz emphasized that Belarus' independence from Moscow, along with democracy, was important for Poland, and that it was wary that Moscow might try to assert control over Belarus in the guise of support for democracy. He described the plight of many decent Belarusian intellectuals and professionals, including some diplomatic colleagues, who felt isolated by their government's actions and the international response.

15. (C) With regard to Kosovo and a Coordinated Declaration of Independence (CDI), Bratkiewicz waffled between go-slow and go-slower. He cautioned that Russia didn't have a sincere interest in Serbia's territorial integrity, but would use Kosovo as a pretext to advance independence for Abkhazia. As if to justify his lukewarm stance on CDI, Bratkiewicz explained, "Poles don't pay much attention to the southern Balkans." Post has seen the same mood when delivering demarches on Serbia to the Polish MFA. PM Tusk himself showed some of this last December when he commented that Poland didn't need to be out in front calling for Kosovar independence. While Kosovo policy does not fall under Bratkiewicz's purview, his outlook is reflective of a cautious overall Polish approach.

16. (C) Bratkiewicz expressed what he described as his personal suspicion that fraud had interfered with Georgia's recent presidential elections. According to him, Saakashvili lacked support in the rural areas where his supporters may have intervened to insure victory. He noted that Georgia's democracy had not yet matured like Poland's. In Poland, even the power-hungry Kaczynski's wouldn't tamper with elections.

Nonetheless, Bratkiewicz reiterated that Poland would continue to strongly support Georgia, including its efforts to build stronger institutions and to affirm its full independence from Russia.

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